

# **Towards the Human Community**

By Jacques Camatte (April 1976)

*“The human being is the true **Gemeinwesen** (community) of man.”*

- Karl Marx

The point here is to indicate an individual itinerary that was never perceived as such, if only because it included the quest for that of the species, of the more or less passive community of men; all filled by the perception that there could be no personal solution, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also from an affective one. In other words, the need for community was felt on an individual level, but it was perceived on a species scale; it was necessary to understand the future of the species.

Two presuppositions are at the root of the activity that produced the texts presented here, signalling the essential milestones of a path taken over more than twenty years: they are K.Marx and A.Bordiga. In K.Marx, I found a definition of man and his future, and in particular the resolution of the contradiction between man as individual species (Gattungswesen) and the global resolution of the question of the state and religion. I had the integral data; A. Bordiga provided the explanation of the moment: that of a profound phase of retreat, the reign of counter-revolution. The link between the two lay in the fact that, for A. Bordiga too, the problem of emancipation was a problem of the species. Historical development was not interpreted on the basis of the deeds and actions of great men, but by attempting to understand how groups of men and women act and react, and how

questions were posed in the name of and for the species. In this way, a vision of the immediate movement was added to that of a movement of great historical amplitude. When a theory is able to provide both these elements, it is inevitable that it takes complete hold of the person confronting it.

This theory, known as Marxism, was not considered to be linked to the individual K. Marx, but to be the product of the emergence of a new class, the proletariat. Marx, but as the product of the emergence of a new class, the proletariat, and as valid for the entire historical phase in which this class existed (invariance of Marxism). Moreover, given the conviction that this theory provided an exhaustive explanation of human evolution (due to the very fact that the proletariat was the last class in history), we were led to posit the absolute nature of the social truth it asserted.

A. Bordiga spoke of the invariance of Marxism, of the theory, and sometimes added the proletariat. Systematically, I decided to use the full expression: invariance of the theory of the proletariat, to emphasize the fact of its irruption with the emergence of this class. One of the areas in which I tried to make my contribution to the work considered, at the time, to be common, impersonal (a work that would be of the species), was to try to support this assertion.

This theory explains the total becoming of the species and thus the passage, mediated by a vast intermediary movement, from primitive communities to the future human community. Insofar as it was recognized as valid-valid, operative-operational, it came to the fore. From the moment it proved obsolete, it was what it designated, what

it explained, that became fundamental. Thus, as an expression of the theory of the proletariat, Invariance varied (there was even negation), but as an affirmation of becoming to the human community, Invariance remains as it was designated.

The word “invariance”, taken from mathematical language, indicates the permanence of something, the perennality of certain human data. Not a nature, which would imply establishing a definitive separation between naturalistic nature and human nature, but a corpus in which the various human generations can find themselves, while at the same time perceiving their differences; this is necessarily linked to what is affirmed in the *Gemeinwesen*, the common being of men in their becoming, an unalienated, non-alienating being in which there is always the possibility of recognizing oneself, of finding oneself in one's own place, as G. W. F. Hegel would say, and, at the same time, the form this common being can take. W.F.Hegel, and, at the same time, the form that this common being can take; hence the obviousness of Marx's phrase “The human being is the true *Gemeinwesen* (community) of man”.

Invariance and program are two words that came into vogue in the early 60s. The second is linked to computing.<sup>1</sup> Information, which is

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<sup>1</sup> With their own particular language, scientists are rediscovering, sometimes unconsciously, very old problems tackled in very different ways by the men who preceded them. Thus, with the terms invariance and program, we might think ourselves far removed from the problem of alienation. Yet an analysis of J. Monod's *Le hasard et la nécessité*, Ed. du Seuil, 1970, shows that, unwillingly, the latter encounters it. Invariance is that of a program transmitted by means of a genetic code that repeats itself indefinitely over time. Chance brings disturbances that can be favorable. In this case, invariance must “conserve chance”, it must absorb it. In other words, invariance (and teleonomy) is opposed to change, to becoming something else (alienation); but when this is favorable (this is determined externally, by natural selection), the best way to realize this becoming something else is to integrate it into the program. In this way, invariance devours chance, which becomes a necessity (a Hegelian dialectic!). Invariance is order and chance disorder (anarchy). From then on, order always prevails or, if it can't, it recovers! Here we see the kinship with certain theories about the *État*. The latter is the order that opposes disturbances and

supposed to give maximum freedom (the principle of negentropy), actually implies rigorous programming, a highly-developed technique with its own constraints, in order to be captured, analyzed and used. It is also linked to futurology. The former was mainly used in biology, and refers to the constancy of information over time. So both are now linked to information, whose theory is presented as the only one capable of “representing” the various physical, biological and other phenomena, right down to the social. In the final analysis, capital is seen as an accumulation of information, which would be like unitary elements, comprising the four fundamental dimensions; as an accumulation of life, defined as a mechanism capable of producing and processing information, which amounts to defining it as a product. We're back to the old problem of political economy.

Structural research, programming, invariance theory, hermeneutics and teleonomy are absolutely linked and directly related to the constitution of capital as a material community: the completed structure.

In its process of anthropomorphism, capital captures all that is human. The resistance of human beings to a future over which they believe they have at least some control, the perception of a constant datum on which they can base a certainty of their absolute non-possession, of their non-reduction to a pure object of capital, is

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various deviations. As society changes, it must integrate the disruptive element while constantly maintaining order. The État would be the guarantor against alienation, “the regulating État of the dialectic of order and movement” (G. Burdeau, Article État, Encyclopaedia Universalis). K. Marx said that the Darwinian concept of the struggle for existence corresponded strangely to the competition of economists, just as strangely J. Monod's theory reflects the becoming of capital. It's what he says. In fact, it describes very well the mechanism of capital's development. The various disruptions to its productive cycle caused by those who challenge it are integrated. You only have to look at the extent to which the Situationist International's critique of advertising has been recuperated, and the extent to which all capital's discourse speaks confidently of changing life, the quality of life, etc. ....

absorbed by capital. A double movement: the need to absorb the human, the need to pose as a being that also finds its invariance and tends to colonize the future.

It would seem, then, that A. Bordiga has merely anticipated the future of capital. To use this as a basis for saying, as some have done of K Marx, that he only produced the discourse of capital, is a tempting operation for many. But revolutionaries cannot be reduced in this way. Consequently, we need to reflect more deeply on what the real revolutionary alternative might be, and whether we can still speak of revolution to characterize the upheaval needed to put an end to capital.

There are three main periods in this journey. This is not an *a posteriori* construction, a breakdown undertaken in order to produce a didactic presentation; this is how it was experienced. I would add that there is no question of apologetics or justification, but of presenting what happened as rigorously as possible. These three periods are:

1. The counter-revolutionary phase, where the aim was to determine how this counter-revolution differed from those that preceded it, how it fulfilled its tasks and exhausted itself. Answering these questions automatically raised the question of the foundations on which the new (and final) revolution would be built.
2. The emergence of revolution in May '68 and reflection on what it was. Could it be explained using the Marxist schema of

revolution? Did it or did it not confirm the theory of the proletariat, or did it shatter it?

3. The search for a new dynamic from the injunction constataction. "This world we have to leave."

The affirmation of the theory's invariance did not sterilize research. On the contrary, in the course of these twenty years, we had to confront a series of questions that often presented themselves as dead-ends for the movement. Various theorists not linked to the Italian left interpreted them as failures of Marxism; in the first period, I accepted A. Bordiga's problem-solving and dead-end solutions. Bordiga, trying to substantiate what was sometimes only given in lapidary form; then I confronted them myself, until, with the help of a few comrades, I had to recognize the exhaustion of theory and was led to posit the necessity of abandoning it, not of going beyond it (although this concern also arose), without thereby casting anathema on K.Marx, F.Engels, etc. ... because they had not been revolutionaries, but mere bourgeois!

I said that the various phases mentioned had indeed been experienced as described above. This is related to A. Bordiga's anti-immediatism and K. Marx's anti-immediacy, which encompasses the former: avoiding immersion in the continuum of the immediate, especially when it turns out to be that of capital. It was necessary to take support from another land, that of the future. By following A. Bordiga's teaching, I was able to determine the characteristics and limits of each phase I was contemporary with, based on the communist forecast-perspective. At the time, I was also

thinking in terms of strategy: it seemed to me that it was possible, thanks to a theoretical effort, to conquer positions on the battlefield in advance, in order to launch the struggle under favorable conditions.

Anti-immediacy, reflection-prediction, non-voluntarism implying the absence of any proselytizing, a permanent affirmation of a certain corpus of theoretical positions - these were the components of theoretical behavior during these periods.

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The first phase, up to 1968, is that of counter-revolution. Clearly, I'm referring here to the communist revolution. It was experienced in the light of A. Bordiga's theoretical clarifications. I have often mentioned the strong points of his predictive analysis in the second post-war period. I can't reiterate them all, but I would like to point out what seemed to me essential: Marxism and communism have nothing to do with the USSR; there is capitalism; we are in a period of counter-revolution; the revolution\*is not for tomorrow; it requires a long preliminary phase for its reaffirmation, because everything has been destroyed; the party, too, can only reappear in the distant future. Should we do nothing? Should we wait? No, but all activity had to be directed towards reappropriating the theory that had to be simultaneously restored and rediscovering the revolutionary energy of earlier phases in the generations that had preceded us. The proletariat cannot resume its insurrectionary movement by following the directives of any leader, or messiah; it is the class as a whole that must be able to rise up and find within itself, thanks to the party it

will have secreted in the previous period and with which it will identify itself not only theoretically but practically, the important energies, as well as the certainty of the goal and the mode of achieving it, because this is already consigned in the theory, which does no more than make explicit the historical mission of the proletariat. This result has its beginnings in the entire history of mankind. Apparently the history of mankind is the (often exhibitionist) story of great men, but in fact it is the product of the lives of the whole of humanity. It's an unconscious phenomenon, and what makes this character even more obvious is the fact that the dominant classes deny any contribution, any activity that generates progress on the part of the oppressed class, in specific historical periods - periods of upheaval. Revolutionary affirmation postulates a constant demystification of history.

Acceptance of these key ideas implied a type of theoretical-practical intervention in which the theoretical aspect inevitably prevailed. First of all, it was necessary to carry out an in-depth study - despite the difficulties of the time due to the almost absolute lack of material and documents - of the theory and history of the workers' movement. We mustn't forget that the Second World War had eliminated revolutionaries and revolutionary cadres, and that the Cold War froze all thought and action in stereotypes, and structured widespread confusion by reactivating the myth of the socialist USSR simply because it was anti-United States.

Removing confusion is not a linear process. The old ones are not really destroyed, but discarded. Often, they are replayed, masked by those that become dominant. Thus, with the de-Stalinization of 1956,



instead of having a clear-cut clarification that could play the role of an acquis for everyone, the illusion of democracy came to drown out all the breakthroughs in understanding and we ended up with a jumble, even if the period was characterized by a certain impetus to break the straitjacket of various schemas. An even greater theoretical effort had to be made, all the more so as A. Bordiga in 1956-57 rigorously set out his perspective on the revolution in the years 75-80 and, at the same time, denied any real proletarian revolutionary character to the movements in Eastern Europe, in particular the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Moreover, the weakening of Stalinism had given rise to a phase of furious criticism, which in many cases sought to throw everything overboard and found a modernity that was in fact - in the case of France, for example - nothing more than the real discourse of capital. The most illustrious case was the magazine *Arguments*. Criticism was based not on the revolutionary pole, but on the triumphant social pole.

Even if there was no proletarian revolution, society didn't stand still, hence the need to clarify how fascism had won the war, and why détente followed the Cold War. The answers to these questions could only come from an in-depth study of the capitalist mode of production's future, not confined to the Leninist schema set out in *Imperialism: the Last Stage of Capitalism*. At the same time, we had to investigate the phenomena that could accelerate the onset of the capitalist crisis, the only way to determine a repolarization of the revolutionary forces working to reform the party. This was where we came up against the question of anti-colonial revolutions, which

from 1950 to 1962 were the most important immediate phenomenon.<sup>2</sup>

The study of the national-colonial question took place in two periods, separated by the acquaintance with K.Marx's fundamental text *Forms preceding the capitalist form of production* (chapter of the *Grundrisse*) in 1958. Before this date, attempts were made to delimit geo-social areas, as A. Bordiga had done in his study of the Russian revolution. The aim was to determine the level of development of productive forces in each area, and to individualize the mode or

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<sup>2</sup> I wrote a few articles in Programme communiste on the subject of anti-colonial revolutions:

"Encore- the PCF and the colonial question" No. 6, 1959, "Promotion of Africa" No. 6, 1959, "Well dug, old Mole!" No. 14, 1961, "Communist program and the Algerian question" which appeared in its modified form in No. 15, 1961. It had been attached to another article written by R. Dangeville; the whole being published under the title "Bases and economic-social perspectives of the Algerian conflict". A correct Italian translation appeared in Il programma comunista, 1961. In 1969 it was published in French in its correct version in No. 7, series I, of Invariance.

Regarding Cuba, I added a paragraph to the translation of an article by E. Sperduto, "The Two Faces of the Cuban Revolution," in "America, Here Is Your Algeria," No. 16, 1961, in which the Russian-American holy alliance is highlighted and denounced.

In addition to these articles and the more important ones already mentioned, I published a number of others, often of little interest given their current relevance:

"Accumulation: A Capitalist and Not a Socialist Phenomenon" (1957); "The Garden of Existentialism" (1957), written in collaboration with L. Laugier. These two articles appeared in a mimeographed bulletin: Travail de Groupe. "Old Marx . . . Young America" (P.C. No. 7, 1959).

"Greatness and Its Party" (P.C. No. 9, 1959).

"A Short Chronicle of French Greatness" (P.C. No. 11, 1960).

"Coexistentialism and Betrayal" (P.C. No. 14, 1961).

"Friends of the People, or Regarding a Congress" (P.C. No. 16, 1961).

"Immediate Effectiveness or Revolutionary Force" appeared in Italian in Il Programma Comunista No. 4, 1964. "The Russian agricultural crisis has social causes" appeared in Italian in Il programma comunista No. 18, 1965. It was also published in Le proletaire 28, January 1966, after being manipulated and censored, under the title "Communism has nothing to do with the Russian agricultural crisis."

modes of production operating there. The destruction of ancient social relations was seen as progressive, since it allowed for the development of capital and thus the formation of the proletariat. After reading K. Marx's text, we didn't really abandon this vision, which was in line with the theory of the proletariat, but we did insist more on a critique of progress, on the glorification of ancient social relations that were more humane; hence an exaltation of the history of different peoples rising up against capitalist metropolises, without sinking into populism. In addition, the idea that certain regions of the world might not be conducive to the development of the capitalist mode of production came to the fore, but no important conclusions were drawn from this. Finally, what fascinated me the most in K. Marx's text was to find a periodization of human history according to the various types of community; unfortunately, the immense study that this demanded didn't allow me to go very far in my investigation. I confined myself to pointing out, schematically, this way of apprehending history in the unpublished *Chapter IV of Capital* and Marx's economic work.

Fundamentally, from the outset, it was clear that these anti-colonial revolutions could not lead to socialism; any prospect of a dual revolution was also to be ruled out; it remained to be determined whether there might not be a certain transgrowth that would inevitably involve radicalization within the metropolises, leading to a weakening of the latter, allowing the anti-colonial movement to achieve greater depth and breadth.

This prospect was not false, since it came true, but over a longer period of time than expected and in a much less revolutionary form.

It was not until 1975 that the phenomenon anticipated in 1960 was realized: the end of the colonization of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

In a later period, the study of countries that had gained independence was analyzed by taking into account an inverse phenomenon: to what extent did they strengthen the global capitalist system? The aim was not to arrive at Eurocentrism but to note that a possibility of accelerating a revolutionary process had been lost.

The question of anti-colonial revolutions gave rise within the organization to oppositions arising from two positions: one which was later called, in other places, Third Worldist, the other which can be characterized as Eurocentric, having as its background the theory of the decadence of the capitalist mode of production and the impossibility for it to further increase the productive forces. The

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<sup>3</sup> This is not the first time that a revolutionary phenomenon takes place more slowly than we thought. K.Marx expected a rapid fall of feudalism; this was not really definitive until the Russian revolution of 1917.

The danger presented by this phase lengthening is to become obsessed with the enemy and not be able to perceive the deep phenomena that more or less imperceptibly transform social data.

Tsarism took the mind of K.Marx and F.Engels who wondered by what means one could get rid of this obstacle to the free development of modern society. F. Engels came to wish for a revolutionary war of Germany against Russia in which the former would defend the achievements of the capitalist mode of production. He did not realize that henceforth (1892) the most dangerous enemy was no longer tsarism but capital as it developed in Germany itself.

The resistance of feudalism should have led K.Marx and F.Engels to carry out research on its root cause, which lies largely in the reformation of communities within this mode of production.

Similarly, in our time, many have abandoned themselves to the immediacy constituted by the persistence of various colonial dominations and have not realized the vast changes that occurred between 1954 (time of a major resumption of struggles) and 1968, for example, the time of the Tet offensive carried out against South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, and even more so between 1920, the date of the Baku Congress, and the aforementioned periods.

We too have not given sufficient thought to the causes of the slowing down of the revolutionary phenomenon: The main one is the disappearance of the proletariat. This we must again examine the world history of this century, not so much to understand what happened but to determine how different countries can move towards communism.

latter did not lack a certain generosity: by its action the proletariat has basically brought the solution for all the men of the planet; it has allowed a rise of the productive forces up to the fully realized capital which is the basis for accessing communism; not only is there nothing more to develop but it is not possible; the only progressive action is the destruction of the capitalist mode of production. Hence, for the current supporters of this theorization, we are living in a kind of Middle Ages, a new barbarism, etc. where technical development is only an appearance of progress. In saying this, they are showing inconsistency, as they are not really putting men and women at the forefront of the transformation that must take place and spare various peoples the painful phases of capitalization.

The first position was based on the immediate; the other was fixed in a historical achievement. The solution has been found; it is enough for its knowledge to be divulged or for others to discover it for themselves. Underlying it lies the idea of the necessity of a dictatorship of the center over the entire periphery.

For those who completely deny the revolutionary nature of anti-colonial movements, how could one conceive of a move towards communism at the beginning of the century (the moment when, according to them, the capitalist mode of production entered into decadence) since the proletariat was absolutely a minority on a global scale? What would have happened to Africa, for example? Logic would dictate that in this case they would give importance to the natives, but that would be sinking into the populism they abhor. The Western proletariat is then the vanguard that must export

consciousness to other countries. But how can it be grafted there if the being of these countries is different?

What was most feared in the wake of A. Bordiga, although it was hardly known, was the flowering of a populist theory among the insurgent peoples that could have asserted that an indigenous social stratum — or even the entire population — would ensure independence; not because we were against it, but because we then saw a purely bourgeois democratic phase that would fix the process at an intermediate stage of development. It was necessary, even if the indigenous proletariat was weak, to put forward the international dimension; any theorization of particular virtues for a given people appeared in contradiction with internationalism. One could not but bet on a possible transgrowth, as the Russian revolution had shown. However, in view of the lack of proletarian movement in these countries, it was well-known that the race struggle sometimes proved to be far more revolutionary than the class struggle.

It was therefore on the basis of all this that one could be in favor of the independence of colonial countries. Furthermore, one could not be insensitive to the purely human aspect: the end of subjugation; the fact of the affirmation of a human dignity acquired thanks to independence and the unveiling of a humanity that had been flouted, denied for centuries. Those who systematically denigrate these revolutionary movements should reflect on the fact that F. Fanon reports that French scientists wrote theses to demonstrate that the brain of Algerians was structured differently from that of Europeans, which explained their supposed inferiority, as well as on the historically significant phrase of Aimé Césaire: "What he (the

bourgeois humanist of the 20th century) does not forgive Hitler is not the crime in itself, but the crime against the white man and having applied European colonialist procedures which until then only affected the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the Negroes of Africa."

The liberation movement was very important for the blacks who in 1960 acquired independence; certainly it was the emancipation of the black and not of man, but it had a considerable consequence for example on the American black revolutionary movement (confirming the perspective). For these men fighting against a powerful racism there was tangible proof of their humanity. With good reason they could finally say: "Black is beautiful". What happened was a progressive emancipation within the framework of the capitalist mode of production, a result identical to that obtained by the proletarians in 1848 and in 1871. These movements represent in fact an extension of the domination of capital to wider areas even if this domination is not real. The essential thing is the elimination of the reduction of Algerians, blacks, etc. to an infra-animal level. From 1960 onwards we are obliged to recognize that white humanity is not the only humanity. If conflicts break out in these countries that have become independent, this raises the question of a non-human world system and, given the impasse in the West, the question of establishing their own future in relation to their past that they are rediscovering and not of imitating the West.

The theory of the importance, of the necessity of the independence of these countries is linked to the theory of the proletariat; on its basis one can only affirm this (at the historical moment to which we refer

here); the alternative would be a populist theory. Unfortunately (as I now think) there was none; there was only a substitutionist theory: the proletariat was replaced by the peasant as did Mao Zedong or Aimé Césaire. They did not seek, unlike the Russian populists, the possibility of another future; they did not pose the problem of grafting Western technical achievements onto the old community social forms. On the contrary—one can anticipate up to the present day—they want to destroy their old social environment; all proclaim war on tribalism.<sup>4</sup>

To assert that since the proletariat in the West does nothing, any revolutionary social movement can only feed the counter-revolution is to want to make everything revolve around the West, it is Eurocentrism and a justification of colonialism, etc. It is above all to make little of the tragic impasse in which a multitude of men and women found themselves and still find themselves in the various so-called backward areas. Finally, this expresses in the most acute way the reversal of the proposition: "the proletariat must not wait for

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<sup>4</sup> Regarding Black Africa, this absence of populist theory must be linked to the terrible oppression it has suffered since the penetration of the first Portuguese traders. After the Second World War, a number of theorists essentially reversed the white theory: they opposed the superiority of whites with that of blacks. This is the case with Fodé Diawara, who wrote *The Manifesto of Primitive Man*, Ed. Grasset, Paris 1972. From the following remark:

"I think with some irritation of all those so-called left-wing intellectuals in Europe who believe that there is objectively no salvation for 'primitive man' outside of industrialization, without being in the least aware that this assertion is profoundly racist: Black man had to wait for the arrival of Marx and the white man to know the true 'destiny of man'," p. 132.

He could have indicated another path that Black Africa should take. In fact, he simply asserts that whiteness represents an earlier human stage and blackness a final stage, which has been distorted and deformed by the introduction of white civilization. Even if we accept such a historical diagnosis, we would not have made much progress because F. Diawara does not indicate how Black people can return to their previous state, nor how whites and yellows can progress toward this same state.



a messiah" into "the proletariat is the new messiah that must be awaited." At the same time, within this reversal, the proletariat takes on, in the eyes of the various "wait-and-see" people, various figures; each putting into this class what he needs to resolve his historical perspective.

This is why it was a great joy when, in 1960, a large part of Africa gained independence, due in large part to the tenacity of the Algerian struggle, especially since it was foreseeable that, in the near future, everything else would follow, and that the newly independent countries would be able to undertake a crusade to liberate their brothers in South Africa.

There is another element that has been emphasized that shows that we were right to have no illusions about what these movements could achieve: the various leaderships were able to negotiate independence only after eliminating the most extremist groups (the Algerian revolution) or eliminated them after it had been achieved at the cost of a period of chaos (the case of Congo-Zaire), so that only the lowest revolutionary potential was able to assert itself.

The analysis of these revolutions did not seem sufficient, let alone exhaustive, so it was necessary to make a new more in-depth study of the different modes of production and reject unilinearism. Indeed, in glorifying the ancient civilizations of these countries, there was the idea that it was not necessary for these countries to go through the same stages as in the West to produce an important civilization that, therefore, there could be another way of development. But this could

not be enough, it would have been necessary to show that there was no inevitability of a given development, that of the West.

In this study of anti-colonial revolutions, a very special difficulty arises: China. A. Bordiga contributed little; the other members of the PCI only embroidered errors on the classic canvas. What seemed important to me was the very type of the Chinese community (which I was to analyze later as a despotic community), but I did not have the time or the means to undertake this investigation.

As far as I am concerned, beyond the questions I have just mentioned, the liberation movement of colonial peoples brought to light an essential fact - already studied in the Western world - that of the community.

Then began a period (1962-1966) characterized by an impasse: according to the forecast, there should have been, during those years, a revolutionary revival linked to the crisis of the capitalist mode of production. However, there was either an agitation which, for the most part, was linked to the defense of the old structures, as was the case for the strikes in the Belgian coal basin in 1960 or that in the coal mines in France in 1963, or it escaped the old workers' movement as was the case with the revolt of the American blacks and, in Europe, what were to be called wildcat strikes.<sup>5</sup> Spontaneity

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<sup>5</sup> In 1965, various strikes at Peugeot and Berliet once again reignited the debate on the importance of trade union struggle for the formation of a class party. At the time, I agreed with the perspective of the necessity of partial struggles (such as the economic struggle) to provoke a certain shift of forces in favor of the revolutionary movement, and I fully accepted Marx's assertion:

"If the working class were to give up its daily conflict with capital, it would certainly deprive itself of the possibility of undertaking any movement of greater magnitude." *Wages, Prices and Profit* (1865).

and autonomy were increasingly asserted, but not a reflexive movement, the only one capable of generating the party. The crisis that had announced itself in the form of a recession in 1958, reappeared periodically in other recessions successively and separately affecting various countries. The repercussions of decolonization were of very low amplitude and the anti-colonial revolutionary movement had quickly sunk into a pronounced establishment. Only Che Guevara remained with his ideology of another age and an aspiration of our time: to put an end to the status quo of this society, and the revolution in China: the movement of the Red Guards which, in its ideology, also appeared as a phenomenon of the past.

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However, I thought that this could no longer be considered within the national framework. So in a text that was never published because it was never finished, but which constituted the substance of a meeting with comrades in Paris, I based myself on Chapter XI of Book III of Capital: "The effects of general fluctuations in wages on production prices", to support this assertion. Indeed, K. Marx shows how a general increase in wages causes a decrease in production prices in production zones with a high organic composition of capital, a decrease in those where it is lower than the social average, and leaves them unchanged in those where it is equal to this average. From there, by identifying in a rough approximation the USA in the first group, Western Europe in the last and the so-called third-world countries in the second, I showed the contradictions that a struggle for a wage increase in Europe, for example, could entail, since both the USA and Europe pump surplus value - following a purely impersonal mechanism - from the underdeveloped countries, and that following a wage increase in these developed areas the latter countries could only be harmed. Consequently, a trade union struggle could only be carried out on a global scale if we really wanted it to unite all workers. Then followed considerations on the consequences of such a wage increase on a global scale.

What was ultimately intended was to emerge clearly in a debate that took place later, outside of us, on the subject of unequal exchange: the question of proletarian internationalism. There are objective mechanisms within the capitalist mode of production that profoundly undermine it, ensuring that proletarians in highly industrialized areas "exploit" those in backward areas, so to speak; this founded what I called the "evil alliance" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as it developed in England and then in the USA.

These considerations were one of the reasons for my rejection of the necessity of unions, of their conquest by the party, etc.

It should be noted, regarding the controversy over unequal exchange, that some authors considered wages to be an independent variable. However, wages are a price, and are therefore themselves subject to vast variation. On the other hand, there is a tendency for wages to become more homogenized globally. In recent years, wages have been increasing in Japan and Europe, where they are almost at the same level as those in the US, which may change the relationship between these different areas.

In 1964-1966—the time of writing of *The Unpublished Sixth Chapter of Capital and the Economic Work of Marx*—various stirrings ran through capital society. It felt as if something was beginning (all the small groups had been reactivated), yet what could have been decisive was not happening: the crisis. Hence the desire to explain the future of capital and its possibility of overcoming its contradictions without going through the stage of crisis, which, simultaneously, explains its real domination over society and the formation of the material community.

The validity of K. Marx's work appeared evident, provided that it was developed from its totality and from the elements that had not been used, particularly with regard to the community. This text on the unpublished Sixth Chapter was the complement to *Origin and Function of the Party Form* of 1961, with integration of data developed in the meantime on the French workers' movement, the three internationals, as well as unpublished works on the individual, philosophy, democratic mystification (including a study of democracy and fascism).

From 1966 to 1968 the characteristics indicated above were accentuated. I was also led to specify the phenomenon of rejuvenation of capital barely outlined by A. Bordiga and the inclusion of various contradictions, their non-disappearance. Thus the Russo-Chinese conflict reactivated the old opposition of the Chinese to the "barbarians of the north"; if the Russians, the new barbarians, prevail on the Chinese front or on the European front and all subsequent developments would be changed, but if they are

compressed into a given space, if Russian, Soviet expansionism were to be stopped, what consequences for a revolution within the immense Soviet area?

More than ever, the need to situate the moment of the revolution was felt. Now, this revolution, to use F. Engels' phrase, could only manifest itself from the moment when the counter-revolution had gone to the end; that is to say, in my opinion, that it had to carry out the immediate tasks of the previous revolution, of the one that it had blocked. Now, an immediate task of the revolution that arose in the years 1917-1919 was to achieve a globalization, generalization of social relations that would have been the basis of communism and which became the support for the transition from the formal domination to the real domination of capital over society in the West and the extension of the former to the entire globe. This implied the elimination of tsarism, the independence of the colonies and their integration into the world community of capital. In this new world, the monetary problem took on another dimension (through the money market there is the constitution of capital in its entirety, says K. Marx). Thus the realization of the material community was verified, and, if this were so, the counter-revolution had gone to the end.

Also, for many, the question arose of how to recognize revolution and what it consisted of. The anti-colonial revolutions had provided some characteristics of it, but given their development in an area that lagged behind the West, it was obvious that this could not be satisfactory. It was necessary to consider how the revolution would appear in the real domination of capital.

The accelerating phenomenon having disappeared (the anti-colonial revolutions) and the revolutionary phase being perceived from a distance, it was important, from the perspective of the time, to specify that the nerve center of its development would be what A. Bordiga thought should be Germany. This led to the in-depth study of capital and to individualize as far as possible the communism present in this society. It was also necessary to try to identify what it consisted of. All this was consistent with the desire to work towards the formation of a party, that is to say an organization that presents enough stability in time and space to be able to predict the future; this stability coming only from the invariant theory over a given historical arc. The party was considered necessary in order to be able to grasp the moment of discontinuity creating the gap through which the revolution would burst.

Another requirement was met: to grasp the global dynamics of social relations; because, although the capitalist mode of production dominates the planet, there is no identity of situation at all points of it. By this very fact, it was easier to perceive their maturation.

The few years before 1968 mark a particular, indefinite moment, imbued with a presentiment (as G.W.F. Hegel would say) that something is going to happen, because the world is indeed in ferment: there is an activation of class theory through Maoism made outside China present in various student movements; there is a certain return to the sources, to K. Marx (the goal of those who undertook it is of little importance here) with L. Althusser and certain leaders of the German SDS. What is disturbing is that this

vast movement that runs through society is not done in a unitary way but, on the contrary, accentuates the phenomenon of groupusculation; there is a certain return to Marxist theory, a limited purge of the Leninist-Trotskyist defects that were applied to it, but there is no proletarian movement, even of small amplitude, that comes to take charge of what A. Bordiga called the work of restoration and affirmation of the theory. This is what I was addressing after November 1966, the date of my departure from the International Communist Party; it was this inadequacy that I was reflecting on when May 1968 broke out.

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May 1968 was not a surprise, not that it had been entirely foreseen, but a revolutionary phenomenon was expected. On the one hand, it was postulated in the forecast of 1956-57 since before the great revolutionary crisis of 1975-80, a phenomenon of lesser importance but decisive for the becoming-constitution of the party was bound to occur. On the other hand, the various analyses of impure revolutions, that is to say those in which several classes intervene, where therefore several modes of production are present and disrupted, had led to postulating the data of a pure revolution which had to necessarily present an absolute discontinuity with the first. We had analyzed the revolution in formal domination of capital, we hoped to see the one in real domination which could not resemble it. Consequently, if we had not been able to describe it, we had thought the inevitability of its originality. Finally, the possibility of such a revolutionary crisis was linked to the disruption of equilibrium in the US economy. Now in March 1968, in a study on the latter, I pointed

out that such a rupture had occurred and that one could therefore expect a revolutionary upheaval.<sup>6</sup> A first historical argument emphasized the relationships between a phenomenon occurring in the USA and those affecting Europe: the American War of Independence and 1789, the Civil War and 1871, the Great Depression of 1929-32 and the victory of fascism (victory of Nazism and strengthening of other fascist variants<sup>7</sup>). The other arguments underpinning this perspective were provided by the recent history of the USA and the worldwide student revolt that had particularly affected Germany and Italy. From there one could hope that something new would manifest, a discontinuity perhaps occurring.

The forecast is made with the help of the knowledge operator: the theory of the proletariat. However, given the absence of a party or, at least, of important nuclei, the coming revolutionary phenomenon was envisaged as having to be a break. That's all. This means that it was in no way possible to predict what the movement that was May 1968 would be. So the important thing, when it happened, was to live it fully in order to perceive, to the very depths, what it corresponded to, how far it could go; could it upset the whole of society? It was necessary to live the exceptional moment, to be imbued with it.

Beyond the relationship with the theoretical forecast, there was the

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<sup>6</sup> I am indicating this approach only to explain a path and not to praise a prediction which, even if it was correct, had no effectiveness given that it was known to an extremely limited number of comrades.

<sup>7</sup> De Gaulle's rise to power in 1958 certainly had deep roots in France's own history and in its relationship with the colonial empire it was losing. However, a global economic and social study could highlight the relationship between the Gaullist movement taking hold in France and the recession in the USA, the first decline of US power. Indeed, despite maintaining its hegemony, the latter country had to, from 1958 onwards, begin to share economic dominance with the Common Market countries and with Japan. The 1958 movement took place at a time of disruption of the balance within the power dominating the world market.



reality of an affective verification: that was indeed the revolution, the collapse of the established, the irruption of another modality of life; an irrational, dreamlike element was manifesting itself. It was about living and not being an activist: not getting excited by believing in the effectiveness of one's small action to propel others in the direction one judges should take, but listening to everyone; living to verify something perceived in the period of non-life. The only intervention was the production of the leaflet *The Human Being is the True Gemeinwesen (Community) of Man*, written at the end of the first week of the movement, but distributed (very little) in the last week of May. I thought it would not be understood but that it would serve to acknowledge this emergence and, simultaneously, to affirm that it was not the revolution, contrary to many who became revolutionaries only at the moment of emergence. This is only aimed at those who during the previous phase had denied any possible future to the revolution, not at all the young people who had the joy of beginning a reflective life with this wonderful hatching-explosion.

The intense excitement that May 68 generated was mixed with a certain anxiety: would the shock be strong enough to annihilate the legacy of 50 years of counter-revolution, if we except a few eruptive moments during the days of 1936 which also had the aspect of celebration, full of spontaneity - in this they anticipated - and the beginnings of the Spanish revolution; these were revolutionary escapes within the counter-revolution. May 68 was the beginning of a cycle. I was convinced of it; it had to be supported, proven. Reflection could not be put aside. What was immediately most important was that we were dealing with a revolutionary movement which did not pose a class determination, which therefore clearly

manifested the requirement indicated in *Origin and Function of the Party Form*: a revolution on a human level.

There was no possibility of mystifying or mythologizing May 68, nor of being disappointed because the essential element had taken place: the break in the continuum of the counter-revolution, the discontinuity. This is why there was never any question of a defeat of May 68. There was no battle, nor alignment of any army against another. The movement did not directly oppose an immediate but a totality; it did not attack particular individuals but an entire system and, given its weakness, it was often content to express a life in the breach opened in the latter.

The absence of an immediate class-based datum might seem to invalidate Marx's theory, but it was a confirmation of his overall schema of revolutionary dynamics. The classes closest to the existing Gemeinwesen intervene first; hence the role recognized for the new middle classes considered as the introducers of the revolutionary class, the one that must accomplish the upheaval of the years 1975-80. The great strikes of 1970 like that of Kiruna or the revolt of the Polish workers were interpreted according to this perspective. It really seemed that the proletariat was tending to be brought back onto the world stage.

The non-affirmation of a class-based given could, moreover, be understood as developing in the dynamics of the revolution since K. Marx often insisted that the goal of the latter was the suppression of the proletariat, the maturity of the movement emerging with May 68 had to assert itself to the extent that the negation of the proletariat

would impose itself more and more. Thus what I thought should be put in the foreground is not the autonomy of the proletariat that Potere Operaio spoke so much about, for example, but its negation.

In other words, May 68 pushed for a significant revitalization of the theory of the proletariat. Hence the desire to make known an important contribution to it: the work of A. Bordiga; the same for a strong current that had been left in the shadows: the German-Dutch left and, in particular, the German movement of the twenties, especially the KAPD. The emergence of the revolution required making known all those who had worked in the direction of its return and whom the counter-revolution had asphyxiated, stifled. This, all the more, as they became current and risked being used for other purposes, that is to say: to bog down the movement at the stage it had reached. It was necessary to structure an understanding. May 68 is an acceleration of an understanding of something already initiated before, already in action. But the acquisition of certain data was insufficient, the discovery of certain truths remained superficial and of limited scope, as with regard to the counter-revolutionary role of the PCF, affirmed only from recent events, forgetting, in particular, its role during the days of 1936. It was necessary to mobilize the entire history of the resistance movement to the triumph of capital, to the triumph of the counter-revolution in the 1920s.

It was an attempt to understand, using all the possible springs of class theory, both with the reduced schema and the broad one, with the hope of a return of the proletariat to the world stage, a return of which one perceived the warning signs. However, a flaw, that is to

say the absence of such a manifestation, would condition the reflection. May 68 could not be explained solely by this theory. There were determinations that escaped it. How to understand the depth of the movement linked to its lack of grip on social reality even though it frightened many people who nevertheless risked nothing? Because there was a manifestation of something unknown, something strange. This, obviously, was felt well before being thought.

The reflection also focused on the fact that May 68 had not been the product of any movement nor used any. The only one who could rightly say that the slogans of May corresponded with its theoretical agitation was the Situationist International. The "we were in everyone's minds" has a reality. The Situationist International therefore correctly expressed the moment of rupture; it was its language, but was not able to provide it with a representation, perhaps because what was revolutionary in it was the language, the representation remaining largely dependent on a bygone past (the workers' councils and the myth of the proletariat). The subsequent development of this movement proves this sufficiently. On the other hand, why could the crisis have been and could still be so long removed? This required a concomitant reactivation of the study of capital becoming a material community.

In *The Communist Revolution: Working Theses* (1969), I tried to situate the achievements of the proletarian movements in the three essential areas: the Euro-North American area, Russia, the countries that had recently acquired their independence, to characterize the moment when capital had arrived and I reaffirmed the opposition, the exteriority of communism in relation to any democracy. The

democratic illusion had resurfaced in May 68 in the form of the demand for direct democracy. To situate the discontinuity, I had to specify the entire previous movement. The theses were to end with an analysis of the mode according to which the revolutionary revival should be carried out according to the (broad) schema of the revolution indicated in the tract *The human being is the true Gemeinwesen (community) of man*.

The study of capital's mode of existence in relation to what the proletariat can be, the search for a fundamental definition of the latter, occupied most of our attention. This culminated in the sending on September 4, 1969 of the letter on racketeering written in collaboration with Gianni Collu (it was published in 1972 under the title *On Organization*). Thus ended the first phase of reflection on May '68, conducted entirely in accordance with the theory of the proletariat, with Marx's theory. With it, the need to break with a certain way of understanding reality and with a well-defined behavior was affirmed.

In doing so, the previous work—from the exit from the PCI in 1966 to the summer of 1969—was to be given a new direction. The working theses on the communist revolution, the summary of which was given in No. 5 of Series I of Invariance and the first part of which was published in No. 6 of the same series, had to be revised, mainly because of imprecise terminology. As for the second part, given the rapid process of questioning a host of questions requiring extensive research, it could not be completed. It remained in draft form; only a few elements were, in revised form, incorporated into later texts.

The knowledge of this letter in a certainly restricted environment, allowed the making of contact with elements coming from horizons other than those of the PCI; a more integrative work, a research in the past and in the future less one-sided, could begin. This also led to a small crisis: some comrades not agreeing with the letter moved away, others on the other hand wanted to go further and affirmed that the publication of the magazine had to cease because its very existence allowed the reformation of a racket; finally others thought that a change of title was necessary, especially because of the perspective of a convergence with other forces. Personally I was in favor of its maintenance because it was the means of connecting with others by making contact with them and by this it would be possible to open up to other influences; it was also necessary to finish the presentation of different historical currents which were discussed above, and to clarify the conclusions affirmed in the letter; Finally, it was urgent to return to the analysis of the real domination of capital over society. Hence the three issues (8, 9, 10 of series I) which really make a transition.

The study of capital involved a re-examination and deepening of Marx's definition: capital is value in process; for this I had to reread all of *Capital* (the four books) as well as the *Grundrisse* in German and I noted that, in the original, K. Marx's thought appeared even clearer with regard to this definition of capital and, above all, a fact appeared very clearly which seemed to me decisive for the understanding of the moment we were living: the tendency of capital to exceed its limits. This had already been studied in the unpublished *Sixth Chapter of Capital and the Economic Work of Marx* but, after

this new analysis, it took on a broader scope by noting that it tended to really escape the rigid determinations of its production process.

Thus, at the time when the second series of Invariance (1971) begins, the idea is asserted that capital has gone beyond its limits and, as a result, a strictly class analysis proves difficult - it is not for nothing that we speak of a universal class.<sup>8</sup> If this is so, we can understand that the situation is considered both more mature and more retrograde because the representations are excessively behind the real phenomenon; there was a need for action. Rigorous determinism could no longer have an impact and, on the other hand, in the opening created by the deployment of this beyond, there could be a diverse understanding on the part of a large number of men and women; the process of producing revolutionaries was clearly underway.

A position had been taken with regard to the more or less recuperative post-May movement that was trying to live its life, but the "deep reasons" of May had not yet been individualized. One could not be satisfied. The investigation had to continue. Then began the second phase of reflection in which one would try to push to the limit all the possibilities of K. Marx's theory by simultaneously taking note of the various revolutionary movements manifested since 1917 and before, as well as the most extremist contemporary currents

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<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it was claimed that the most revolutionary moment had been 1848, the moment of the emergence of the proletarian class. Later, the study was to show that this moment had been preceded by a debate (around 1840-1847) within the Hegelian left, mainly, which in fact posed all the problems that we will encounter later. 1848 confirmed Marx in his position on the necessity of intervention, of the use of politics. This overshadowed the other positions but did not eliminate them. This was addressed in 1973 in the *Provisional Theses*.

such as Potere Operaio in Italy, the Situationist International in France, the S.D.S. in Germany, etc. . . without putting them, obviously, on the same level. It was necessary to study in detail how they conceived the revolutionary movement to come.

As I have already said, the events in Danzig were included in the perspective put forward in the tract *The human being is the true Gemeinwesen of man*, but the reflection on the monetary crisis and its relationship with the real crisis of capital, the study of fictitious capital as well as the clarifications made to the concept of universal class led each time to broaden the discourse, to increase the sphere of investigation. In addition, the Russian question was taken up again by asking the question of why the Slavic area resisted the penetration of capital, which inevitably led to a new study of archaic communities and even to the origin of man. All this raised awareness of a profound phenomenon: the biological dimension of the revolution, intuited during the reading of Leroi-Gourhan's book *Gesture and Speech*; this in connection with the reflection on the mode of being, on the life of May 68: desire to speak out, to act by oneself (eliminating mediations), to make great room for the imagination (the dimension of the celebration seemed to me less essential, less worthy of attention having always thought that the revolution could not be an act of contrition).

This was another basis for asserting that the process of production of revolutionaries had begun. I could not assert this without delving deeper into the anti-racket thesis, what the real domination of capital over society is; without highlighting the interiorization of this, that is to say, how the process of production of capital took hold



of the inner life of each man (not an economy of interiority by apposition to an economy of exteriority), how the mode of being of each human being was modeled on that of capital.<sup>9</sup>

The study of capital and other forms of production convinced me more and more of the convergence of the MPC-MPA, which posed the realization of a structure (the material community of capital) and rooted current despotism in a distant history. For his part, J. L. Darlet came to the conclusion that capital is only representation, which I prefer to state: capital is no longer anything but a representation, to take into account the fact that it is through a historical process that it becomes such and is reduced to that. It is clear that from this point on the problematic of fictitious capital is surpassed, simultaneously posing with greater acuity the question of the revolutionary class, all the more so since it was no longer possible to maintain the thesis of the universal class. The affirmation of the latter can be conceived for a fairly short period of time, a moment of negation of the proletariat and classes, but from the moment when the period of time turned out to be longer, it could no longer be used, especially if, simultaneously, the realization of the

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<sup>9</sup> At the same time, I was undertaking a study, which is still far from finished, on the presuppositions of capital with the aim, first of all, of understanding how it could realize philosophy. I was also analyzing the *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy of 1857*. Marx anticipates structuralist research by determining what the structure of the capitalist mode of production and the invariants of the economy are, the abstractions of the understanding = verständigte Abstraktion as well as the conditions of scientificity of political economy. Official science will approach such an approach much later. Indeed, it is only relatively recently that we encounter in biology, for example, the same structural discourse (more elaborated with regard to its structuralism): J. Monod *Le hasard et la besoin*, Le Seuil 1970; F. Jacob *La logique du vivant* Gallimard, 1970.

material community of capital was highlighted in such a way that it is more accurate, to characterize the social whole in which we live, to speak of community-capital, of despotism of capital and no longer of mode of production. Ultimately, the dynamics of production imply classes and then a result which is the community-capital.

J.L. Darlet, in noting that capital had actually developed, takes a position that is the opposite of that of K. Marx, who in the second book of Capital asks the question: what are the conditions for the global reproduction of capital? Based on the law of value, he shows that by wanting to respect it, it is impossible to give an explanation of the current existence of capital. He considers that the essential importance of this theory in the work of K. Marx is linked to the fact that it is coupled with the theory of the proletariat. Each being a variant of the same theory. By showing the evanescence of the proletariat, its integration, he comes to affirm the obsolescence of both or, if you like, the obsolescence of the Marxian representation of social development. Historical study led to effectively rejecting this representation, as the study of the Russian revolution showed.

Thus was completed the break with the theory of the proletariat, therefore with K. Marx and with all those who had developed it in different dimensions, figures, like the anarchists. But, in my opinion, it had been valid. This is what I affirmed in another form by exposing the escape of capital.

From this point on, the work of K. Marx appears to me as the culmination of the reflection generated in the intermediate period between primitive communities and the community to come, an

attempt to think about the global phenomenon and to oppose the phenomenon of alienation represented by the capital monster as it presented itself at the time when he made his study, a capital monster which is in a certain continuity with the previous elements.<sup>10</sup> In this sense there is a link with the heretics or the Gnostics even if, for K. Marx, religion could sometimes be only the opium of the people. This way of seeing was all the more necessary since dialectics no longer appeared as a form beyond metaphysics, its surpassing but, finally, as H. Bastelica affirms and will demonstrate, a particular case of the latter because it does not escape the binary thought that arose at the moment when the fundamental dichotomy interiority-exteriority was imposed.

It was not only purely theoretical reflections that allowed us to reach these conclusions. The fundamental element that opened a dynamic of understanding was the attempt, in 1972, to constitute a community. Indeed, it was impossible for us to engage in its creation without first having questioned our mode of being determined by the community of capital. We had to avoid rebuilding a cell of a capitalist fabric. To this end, we examined, during a vital approach, the different presuppositions of capital, what the couple is with the aspects of sexuality, the relationship between social binarity — man-woman — and binary thinking, etc. It was the tension to create something new, which we felt deeply as such, that allowed us to unblock our brains; yet we had no illusions about the concrete realization of the community. The important thing was that we lived a possibility. We soon came to believe that at various times in

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<sup>10</sup> The despotism of capital appears to be that of what has been externalized as well as that of human wandering.

history, other possibilities arose but were inhibited. Hence the urgency of reappropriating them and understanding their failure in order to finally achieve something that was truly outside of capital. We no longer simply had to wait for the revolution to exist.

During this year 1972 another event came to reinforce our enthusiasm and our determination, it was the publication of the MIT report for the Club of Rome: *The Limits of Development* published in French under the title *Halt to Growth*. There was there a complete confirmation of the perspective of K. Marx whose essential work is a long reflection on the limits of capital, as well as that of A. Bordiga who in the years 1956-58 had in *The Capitalist Economy in the West and the Historical Course of its Development* established a curve of mineral production and a curve of organic production by showing that a problem of mineral resources would arise but that above all, capitalism would increasingly starve man because the organic curve grows less and less quickly for a population always in progression.

The controversy over this report, as over S. Mansholt's letter to Malfatti, simultaneously revealed the protagonists of the drama and specified the scenario of the coming clash. The social layers closest to the organization in place are for reformism and even for a questioning of the system (a self-criticism, said G. Cesarano and G. Collu); this is the starting point of a revolution in mentalities that will lead to a questioning of a much greater amplitude on the part of those who are directly subjected, oppressed by the system, who are at the base. With, simultaneously, the mechanism of recuperation of criticisms, of oppositions precisely to make the unbearable bearable. On the other hand, the spokespeople of the layers furthest removed

from the organization in place refuse to question the system (achieve zero growth), remain totally locked into the perspective of the development of productive forces and defend the proletariat as a category of capital (variable capital), therefore the status quo and do not realize the enormous dangers that such blindness implies; because the exhaustion of natural resources, the destruction of nature as well as overpopulation are tangible realities.

The debate will be between those who support the old capitalism (whether liberals, radicals, or Marxists in their communist, Trotskyist, etc. varieties) and those who want a new direction for the production of both material goods and people so that it ultimately corresponds to the current state of capital, which has become representation. And then there will be those who want a future outside of all this because they see that the development of productive forces leads to a dead end.<sup>11</sup>

The high school movement of 1973 reactivated May 68 by simultaneously showing the impasse: opposing the system equals giving it strength again; we must find other means, other modes of struggle; what does violence mean? etc. This movement signals, at least for France, the end of the impulse of May 68. This observation

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<sup>11</sup> I have undertaken a broad study of this MIT report, but the breadth of the issues to be studied has not yet allowed for any tangible results. However, some conclusions appear in the articles *This World We Must Leave* and *This Is Where Fear Is, This Is Where We Must Jump!* (*Invariance* No. 5 and No. 6, Series II).

On the other hand, G. Cesarano and G. Collu have written a sort of response: *Apocalypse and Revolution*. Ed. Dedalo, Bari, 1972, the French translation of which is currently being published in *Invariance*.

inevitably pushed us to reflect on the dynamics of liberation, of emancipation which poses the mechanism for exiting alienation. This was also necessary in connection with the analysis of another movement leading to a vast impasse, the feminist movement which, at first, had a classist position, then posed the necessity of the emancipation of women as such without making any further reference to any class, whether against or with men. But what does the logic of this dynamic lead to if not the destruction of the species since it implies the elimination of one of the sexes? In its more moderate form it makes a woman a man and enters into the dynamics of capital (making a man a woman is a possible variant, achievable by capital).

Consequently, not only is there a need for a clear, absolute break in representation, as was the case in May 68, but it is necessary to leave this world, all its dynamics, to find another; to seek in the past its possible, which was denied. Consequently, the study of heretics (in various countries), of Gnostics, took on a new dimension: to note the wandering of humanity which, from the break with nature, throws itself predominantly - that is to say, it was the possible that was realized - into the domination of nature, into the glorification of its difference, thus separating itself from the vital continuum and arriving, in suffering and through carnage, at a conscience...

This need to move away from capital is felt more or less clearly, but on all sides there is fear of the leap that must be made. What is needed is for the only active reference point to be immediate—thus losing its character as a reference point, which implies a process of

abstraction—the Gemeinwesen, that is, the human element in its continuity.

This does not eliminate the old problems. They are resized, taken from a different perspective. This is the case with the question of the crisis.

The disruption of balance affirmed in 1974-75, notable beforehand, accelerated by the crisis provoked by 1973, will not have the same effect as in 1968. It is inevitable that it will result in a break in representation that will no longer imply an emergence of the revolution but a maturation of it, of revolutionaries, if only through the rejection of old representations.

The years 1974-75 were perceived as constituting a phase of retreat, which does not call into question the affirmation of 1972 concerning the process of production of revolutionaries. It is necessary to recognize a very powerful offensive return of the old world and of the old problematics: the events in Chile, those in Greece, at the same time as the Lip affair, tended to reimmerge all the opponents of capital in the old practices; the revitalization of Lenin-Trotskyism and other variants of leftism reached its peak in the Portuguese revolution. The momentum of 1968 died down in Portugal where what the high school movement of 1973 had revealed was more strikingly manifested: the impasse. This revolution, which is largely a recapitulation of previous movements, clearly marks the end of an era. It seems that the various events never tire of signaling to everyone that we must radically break with a certain representation, a practice that is bogged down...

This observation of stagnation that the Portuguese movement presents us with forces us to rethink the phenomenon of revolution (which was already addressed in *The Decadence of the Capitalist Mode of Production or the Decadence of Humanity* when we realize, with K. Marx, that it is capital that is revolutionary); then we see that the evolution of Europe since the 16th century has been a revolutionary evolution and that it is, in essence, that of capital: that for a long time, counterrevolution was an attempt to oppose capital, but with fascism, it too is an element of its affirmation (there is no longer a real right). The revolution-counterrevolution binary is the positing of a single reality, that of capital, and we are trapped within the structure that is the capital community.

Thus, the maturation discussed above can no longer be that of a revolution (just as there had to be a final class, the proletariat, there had to be a final revolution, the proletarian or communist revolution); It will firstly concern the awareness of the impasse, of the vicious circle of revolution-counter-revolution and consequently the need to escape this binary.

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The phase that began in 1975 was profoundly determined by what the statement "*This world that must be left*" implies. It seems that what we have individualized in this way has been perceived by others who more or less realize it. This new phase is therefore not linked to a personal affirmation. Apart from the spatial investigation consisting of seeking ways out of this world, it is still important to



make a historical analysis because, within the vast intermediary movement, there were different human groupings that projected what we would like to achieve now. It can be considered that in some ways the anarchists attempted such an exit in a superficial way; we can find in their "indifference in political matters" a precursor element of the refusal to play the existing social game.

It would seem, then, that everything is repeating itself and that we are condemned to play increasingly ancient roles (since we are focusing on heretics and Gnostics) in increasingly distant eras. This is, in reality, a certain manifestation of invariance. The need for human community is not new, and during the construction of the current capital community, which plunges its presuppositions into a distant past, marked by profound setbacks, such as the entire Middle Ages, various attempts to realize it were made.

If one can say (G. Cesarano, G. Collu) that the movement of capital is the desecration of the sacred, one can affirm that revolution is the secularization of heresy.

Those who defended the sacred against the movement of capital, just as those who opposed the revolution, while fighting for the domination of one class over another, affirmed something human. For the sacred is only part of a global, initial manifestation. It only appears from a break that opposes two modalities of human life (two moments). Capital restores a unity by profaning and reducing everything to the same level. This is the total loss of what philosophers have called human transcendence. At the same time, we see the impasse of duality: heretics, by opposing established

religion but leaving aside the profane future, could not have a tangible hold on the reality to be transformed; moreover, they did not truly go beyond the founding break of religion and therefore of their heresy. In other words, the heresy-religion pairing is quite similar to that of revolution-counter-revolution, taking into account, moreover, that the revolutionaries themselves have misunderstood, neglected the importance of the sacred. The progress (science)-regression pairing lies in the same problematic. Added to this is the fact that science has not made religion disappear; at most, it has succeeded in replacing it by founding scientism; above all, it has not been able to establish the deep aim of religion because the latter preserves something that has been lost. All these assertions imply returning to various so-called metaphysical questions such as evil, death, etc.

It is not possible to confront various constituent elements of the human phylum at a given moment of its development if we do not consider the data of its origin because the current way of life is justified in the name of a certain biological nature of man, as well as the increasingly carnivorous diet that is imposed in the most developed countries. However, it is only by abandoning this that humanity will be able to truly achieve reconciliation with nature. Then the problem of life in all its forms will be able to regain a primacy that it should never have lost. Man is a modality of life, that with which there is access to a reflexive phenomenon. For this to flourish, all other forms of life are necessary, hence the need to drastically limit demographic expansion. This is also essential for man, because it is not true that all areas of the globe are equally viable, habitable; Moreover, the insane growth of the population

justifies the most stupid interventions to try to increase food production.

This new phase is characterized by the summation of everything previously acquired and by the desire to take a different path. This is, moreover, the conclusion of the reflection on previous achievements. It is no longer a matter of wanting to surpass anything, but of placing oneself outside a vast historical movement that began with the dissolution of primitive communities and is now ending. It can be seen as a total structure whose constant relationships and invariants can be highlighted, and at the same time, a developing fact that is now being realized: the capital community.

Capital is the absolute manifestation of human alienation and, at the same time, it realizes a human project. Good and evil are profoundly human; they are formed within human wandering.

We will therefore have to try to locate the moment, or moments, of the wandering, which cannot be done without a study of human paleontology in conjunction with that of the climatic variations of the globe because we can ask ourselves to what extent the human species has not been forced into an adaptation which is not intimately compatible with its biological being; that adaptation is indeed in this case an effect produced in the effort to survive in very difficult conditions. So - by making a leap, to the present day - it is not simply a question for us of achieving a return to a given natural stage, but of starting from scratch by using within ourselves other unexplored, repressed possibilities.

There can be no question of proposing a new theory with universal pretensions, another representation that should be accepted by all, because it is fundamentally a way of being. We must, at least initially, recognize a new path, individualize a movement that will be linked to the realization of these possibilities for which the entire intermediary movement is not necessarily a contribution, something that could be used by changing the method of use as well as the purpose.

From this perspective, denouncing the exteriority-interiority divide takes on its full necessity because we must reject the blackmail of the human racket that founds civilization through the famous "what distinguishes us from animals," which, in turn, justifies massacres. Anyone who is not included in the distinction can be tortured, killed. This is the starting point of all racisms.

We will resume the study of an often-mentioned phenomenon: the domestication of human beings.<sup>12</sup> How the break with nature is related to it; what are the problems that arise from it, in particular the anxiety of the uncertainty of existence in the world and all the practices linked to it, the adoption of a way of life that generates troubles posing the need for intervention at all levels: medicine with regard to bodily health, religion to reintegrate the being into a community, (the State relays religion when the primitive community

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<sup>12</sup> Most ethologists, including K. Lorentz, Eibl-Eibesfeld, etc., consider domestication to be linked to the emergence of a more or less permanent center where men and women could find protection and rest, and therefore security. From then on, the entire development of civilization is seen as a reinforcement of this domestication, which is posed solely in a positive light. This obliges us to begin our study from the individualization of the human phylum.

has been destroyed) the philosophy that justifies the break and the necessity of the State, logic with, at the beginning, its coupling with rhetoric as a means of reintegrating into the community by using communication mechanisms. Science will later relay everything and give the concept of intervention all its fullness. We will find this with K. Marx, in 1844 (cf. *Theses on Feuerbach and German Ideology*): it is a question of intervening to transform the world. In another form, it is the whole philosophy-theory of praxis that must be examined, not to arrive at a theory of passivity, but to determine in what conditions men and women have ultimately been trapped in an activity that alienates them ever more.

It has always been a matter of intervening to repair an evil, from which it was necessary to heal. Medicine, religion, politics, and science operate with a common concept: that of therapeutics, although it is only operationally apparent for the former. The human species would be the sick species, either structurally or because of its future. Situating wandering amounts to situating this illness, which is both camouflaged and structured by the autonomization of representation.

The study of the biological dimension of the revolution converges with that of wandering. It will be particularly important to highlight what was repressed by the dynamics of oppression and which tended to assert itself at various times. The spiritual dimension of human beings giving rise to the vogue of spiritualism from 1847, the movement of reaffirmation of the sacred, of the irrational from 1917, but also the affirmation of the body and therefore of the Dionysian dimension (with affirmation of paganism and rebellion against the

church) in the twenties of this century that we find at the base of fascism especially in its Nazi variant. Hence also the current vogue of F. Nietzsche. We note that these movements of reaffirmation of human dimensions that were denied occur at the periods of the making of bourgeois society. It is certain that there were also some at the time of its establishment in the West. Finally, returning to our time, psychoanalysis and ethnology are a rationalization of this revolt of the body (ethnology in its dimension of study of myths and the various modalities of sexuality). They are a moment of exteriorization dispossession of what had simply been repressed.

These are some elements of the representation of the new dynamic we want to undertake. The latter must be found. For the moment, we are trying to perceive it with the help of a global activity. Here, it can only be evoked through a more or less complete representation. Such a search implies that we increasingly reject the dominant lifestyle, especially with regard to diet, with the consequences that result from it.<sup>13</sup> This is why the 1972 community project is not abandoned; it is posed in more precise terms, with more rigor in connection with the requirement: *This world that we must leave*.

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<sup>13</sup> Along with sexuality and food—determining elements—clothing plays a role in the repression of men and women, as well as in the manifestation of their rebellion. Indeed, it can serve to standardize them (army, ecclesiastical bodies, etc.) or to originalize and differentiate themselves (from Saint-Simonians to hippies and those who reject the need for clothing). However, a phenomenon that was initially linked to it and which has become autonomous, fashion, comes to mask the repression. It has been analyzed extensively in connection with a phenomenon from which it is inseparable: advertising, publicity. Its study falls within the framework of the process of valorization of the capitalist individual, and within that of social symbolism and semiotics: clothing appears as a symbol and sign. We will return to this later.

As for the journal, its role remains: to maintain contacts and make new ones. It is impossible to avoid a phenomenon denounced by many before us: passive consumption and remaining within a mercantile circuit, thus fully within the domain of capital. However, since Invariance offers no recipes, no lessons, it is difficult to create invariance practitioners. It is about living, not teaching.

We are determined by everything, particularly by the absence of knowledge, both theoretical and emotional. The journal must allow us to transform absences into presences; it must be a search for the other. It must create an openness as vast as life itself.

It is hoped that those who read will conduct a study for their own benefit and succeed in building their own representation. Therefore, what matters—to the extent that true diversity is created—is communication. For the moment, this is essentially achieved through spoken and written language. We cannot neglect them under the pretext that in the finally realized human community, men and women will rediscover or invent other, more immediate, intuitive and global modes of communication.

For the moment, we can only listen to everything that tends toward a common future: to perceive how different humanities strive toward the same global realization. We cannot create a language because it depends on another mode of being, on another life. Nor is it possible to defend a particular language. If we cannot immediately create other modes of communication, we must not deny their necessity and their possibilities within us.

In this perspective of reunion of all humanities, in a differentiated (non-homogenized) union, it is important to find the meaning of diversity: knowing how to live the diversity of the other. This is only possible with the end of the illness: feeling put or caused by the manifestation of another modality of life. Human individualities have not yet perceived the totality of possibilities, that is to say, there is no integration and immediate manifestation of the *Gemeinwesen*. The being confronts itself as a unitary element vis-à-vis another placed in the same situation: there is discontinuity. The possibility of communication in reception as in negation (or even destruction) is then the existence of a mediation, of a general equivalent (god for example). There is agreement or not with the latter. In general, social pressure operates so that agreement is made. Here we find the mechanism of racketeering. To belong, one must submit to a discipline, accept rules, and thus domestication. The destruction of all division-mediation is essential.

We have often insisted, and we still do, on the phenomenon of racketeering to such an extent that some are led to think that we advocate an individual dynamic, that we reject any union. In reality our method is to try to make each person become "autonomous", that is to say, face their own path, that they do not depend on theory, on organization. From there, union can occur. It implies the destruction of mediation so that the approach is that of rediscovering at the level of each being the dimension of *Gemeinwesen* and that it is the immediate human that binds us so that we can manifest an infinite diversity without ever having the possibility of losing ourselves, of alienating ourselves because it is possible for us to find



ourselves in a Gemeinwesen (posed relative to both the collective and individuality).

We are, of course, determined, but it is a determination of capital. It requires the rupture of a determinism that we recognize as active (recognition of a being that we want to flee, whose despotism we do not want to accept). Until now we have thought, with K. Marx, that a crisis is necessary for the revolution to occur. However, we see that the struggle carried out while preserving the presuppositions of capital, by remaining on its ground, only reinforces its domination. We must leave this world, we must therefore make an act of will and no longer simply wait for a moment of rupture called revolution. In saying this, I am careful not to state recipes. What I want to point out is the necessity of a different behavior, not a precise type of behavior that must and can achieve this break. Such an assertion breaks with historical materialism. To escape destruction, one must escape the latter; it is at this level in particular that the accusation of idealism, humanism, etc. arises. I cannot claim either idealism or materialism as inadequate representations of the process of human life; they are fundamentally ways of thinking resulting from humanity's separation from nature; it is also true that they were linked to specific classes. Now, we are at a time when these are no longer effective. We therefore have multiple reasons to reject all these representations.

No religion, no ideology, no theory, current or past, can be effective in representing the dynamic that must be undertaken. One can only find elements indicating the invariance of a will to refuse. The

current movement is that of the manifestation of the definitive exhaustion of all ancient representations.

This does not mean at all that they no longer have any use for the world of capital. In fact, in the case of the Christian religion, especially with regard to Catholicism, we are witnessing a certain "rejuvenation" due to two essential facts: the bankruptcy of Illuminism with the questioning of the science directly linked to it, and the end of the workers' movement with the loss of operationality of the work of K. Marx. For Catholics who do not want to believe in the obsolescence of their religion and their Church, a sort of virginization occurs: Illuminism, Marxism, workers' movement, everything has failed, they remain the only ones to defend a community - the hierarchical ecclesiastical community - and are the only ones from now on who are able to oppose capital. Thus a remarkable sleight of hand of all the atrocities committed by the Church takes place, all memory of the Inquisition vanishes; or, if some still mentioned them, it is as ancient errors that the new church could not commit. It is even possible for them to excuse the ignoble attitude of Christians towards the Gnostics and heretics and to try to avoid any debate about the presuppositions of the foundation of the Catholic Church. For one would then see clearly how it was created by destroying the sects that opposed the established world of the time and by recuperating the community aspiration, the aspiration to a stage of divine-humanity of which Soloviev will still speak at the beginning of this century.

So, by highlighting that the struggle against capital was not the monopoly of the left but had also been the work of the right and of

the Church itself, I do not in any way aim to deny the struggle of the materialists, of the encyclopedists of the 18th century against religion, the struggle against the infamous, nor to reject the sentence of K. Marx "religion is the opium of the people", but to reveal the immediacy of the struggle of all those who preceded us, the inadequacy of their understanding of the religious phenomenon which often led them, in wanting to eliminate the latter, to deny human "transcendence". Religion could not have the hold it had and still has on men and women if it were only obscurantism, debauchery, vileness, if one found in it only compromise with (often accompanied by blessing) the various successive states that were and still are repressive. Its strength comes from having collected and preserved something that predates it: the aspiration to community, which is born from the destruction of the old organic communities linked to nature. It is around this element that each of the great religions in place has organized the racket that makes men and women "blackmail" with promises of the afterlife that must satisfy, in the case of the Christian religion mainly, an extraordinary master builder: the usurer god of whom A. Bordiga spoke.<sup>14</sup> The ignoble deception of the priests was, over the centuries, to present themselves as the only possible intermediaries (intercessors)

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Bordiga: *In Janzizio, Death is not Scary* in *Bordiga and the Passion of Communism*, Spartacus, Paris, 1974, p. 197.

To highlight the originality of their history and to clarify their identity, various regionalist movements (Occitan, Breton, etc.) are led to examine the historical moment when all this was denied. They then uncover the eminently repressive and destructive role of the Church and revive sects crushed by it, such as the Cathars. Thus, the forces of the past can come to the aid of those of the present to eliminate centuries-old oppression, provided they do not allow themselves to become confined to the immediate, that is, they step outside the framework of regionalism.

between the aspiration of men and women and the realization of this aspiration.

The current stage of the real domination of capital requires a despotic community representation which can be developed, initially, from a cocktail of various previous representations and especially those tending to break with these, within which, in the West, that of the Catholic Church can play a determining role.

Seeking a new dynamic is not an escape, nor a step outside of time, because it does not consist of rejecting everything that has preceded us; something we have criticized many revolutionaries for, who only end up in a vacuum. The entire workers' movement has provided an achievement; it was the last to fight against the domination of the despotic mechanism that reaches its culmination with capital. It is a human pole, especially with regard to democracy. So if we have wiped the slate clean... we retain roots in this vast movement. What is missing in the youth revolt is the historical-theoretical dimension that would give them strength and structure; they would receive enormous support.

Our position can only be effective if it is highly coherent and rejects any compromise, which gives it an uncompromising character. At a time when everything is evanescent, a simple statement appears to many to be despotic. However, what must be avoided above all is the decay of the species. This is why we do not simply say that there is a historical justification for communism; we affirm, more precisely, more peremptorily: only community can save humanity.

The human being is the true Gemeinwesen (community) of man. This statement has the defect of privileging the human species; it is flawed because it does not indicate the necessity of the flourishing of all forms of life for this community to be realized: the necessity of the reconciliation of man with nature, just as it does not point out the imperative need for human diversity. In reality these defects are not attributable to K. Marx's formula but to our inability to really explain what the human being is. To truly move towards the human community, it is precisely this clarification that must be carried out, which can only be achieved by taking a new path.